

I trust that my friends opposite wish to hear an explanation. There are two matters before the committee. One of them is the consideration of a letter that has been drafted. Both sides have consulted with respect to urging the Minister of Justice to proceed more swiftly than originally proposed on the second phase of the gun control legislation. The committee believed that it was in the interests of all concerned that the bill receive speedy passage, but it did not want to have the comments not made, even though they were assisting or cooperating in speedy passage. It was agreed that the committee draft a strongly worded letter to be sent to the minister, the idea being that if approved later today, we could send the letter and make it public tomorrow so that it would be a matter of public record. I would do it during Senators' Statements.

As well, the committee will consider Bill C-3. There are a large number of witnesses, all of whom would love to be able to coordinate their presentations. We need the certainty of time.

Senator Molgat: I thank Senator Nurgitz for his explanation. I understand the House of Commons will adjourn tomorrow; the last information I have is that it is adjourning tomorrow. On that basis, it is important to get that letter to the minister before the House adjourns. Under those circumstances, I agree to leave being granted.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

ANSWER TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION

QUEBEC FLAG—BROADCASTING OF BROCKVILLE INCIDENT

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer to a written question, Question No. 50 on the Order Paper, standing in the name of Senator Molgat.

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): What is the delayed answer?

Senator Lynch-Staunton: It is about an incident regarding the Quebec flag.

Senator Molgat: Is it a lengthy response?

Senator Lynch-Staunton: No.

Senator Molgat: I wonder if you would be prepared to read it into the record.

Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition): It goes on the record, but read it viva voce.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: The question has to do with an event regarding the treatment of the Quebec flag in Brockville,

Ontario, in September 1989, which was shown on the CBC and picked up by other media. The answer is as follows:

This matter has been brought to the attention of the Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). We are informed as follows:

Broadcasting regulations require retention of broadcast tapes for only 28 days following the date of broadcast. Unless a complaint is received within that period, tapes are then allowed to be destroyed. Given that usage of taped material which is the subject of this inquiry took place several months after the initial incident, and that usage was more than a year ago, there is no practical way for the Commission to ascertain how many showings took place.

CBC records are not maintained in a fashion that makes it possible to extract the specific information required to respond to this question. The records do indicate, however, that neither the CBC's French nor its English network carried reports of the flag incident in Brockville at the time it occurred in September 1989 on any national network news programs, i.e. *The National*, *Le Téléjournal*, etc. Tape of the incident was, however, relayed at that time to all CBC owned and operated stations across the country as part of the regular daily news feed of items provided by the network for inclusion in local/regional news programs at the option of the individual stations.

Several months after the events in Brockville, at the time when it was becoming obvious that the Meech Lake Accord might not be ratified by its deadline, the Brockville item resurfaced in the general media throughout the country. It was cited or discussed in various magazine articles, newspaper and radio reports, and clips from it were used to illustrate points in television reports about Meech-related stories and issues. During that period from February through June 1990, it is likely that CBC's national network news programs, French and English, carried clips from the original Brockville tape at one time or another.

On November 5 and 6, 1990, *The Journal* broadcast a special two-part documentary entitled "The Brockville Incident". The program documented how a single incident, virtually unnoticed at the time it happened, evolved into a major symbol in a national debate.

• (1420)

Senator Molgat: I thank Senator Lynch-Staunton very much for reading the answer.

Was the Brockville incident, which was broadcast on CBC, also broadcast on Radio-Canada in the French version?

Senator Lynch-Staunton: As I recall, it was, and repeatedly.

Senator Frith: It was in French? Would you make sure of that?